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CHILDREN TRAINED

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ARGUMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR THE CONSIDERATION OF
PASTORS, AND CHRISTIAN PARENTS AND TEACHERS.

BY

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First Congregational Church, Durham, Conn.

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INTRODUCTORY.

ALTHOUGH the First Part of this little volume treats specifically of the Obligations and Methods of the work of the Pastor among the young, it is not therefore to be inferred that the considerations presented have exclusively an interest for him. They make their appeal to all those on whom, in the Providence of God, children are dependent for religious training. It is hoped that Christian parents and Christian teachers of every class may turn them to good account; and especially that, in the Lessons and Prayers of the Second Part, they will find a help of which they may profitably avail themselves.



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CHILDREN IN TRAINING

FOR

DISCIPLESHIP.

PART FIRST.

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PASTOR FOR
THE SPIRITUAL TRAINING OF THE CHILDREN OF HIS CHARGE.

I.—THE QUESTION OF RESPONSIBILITY—WHAT IT INVOLVES.

A question whose solution is worthy of being earnestly sought is this—*Can a practicable system of religious teaching be proposed by which the successive classes of children growing up under a Pastor's charge may be so trained as that they may be reasonably expected, in their early years, to enter consciously upon the Christian life and to become fitly qualified for church membership?* If the practicability of such a system can be established, the responsibility of the Pastor is seen to be commensurate with the spiritual needs of the children. But even if we do not see our way clear to give an affirma-

tive answer to the question in this broad form, a fair discussion is fitted to bring into bold relief a field of oversight and labor, greatly neglected, from which the richest harvests are waiting to be gathered. The culture of child piety is the exigent question before the Church. In this work, just at the present time, as never before, are centered her most pressing obligations, her grandest opportunities, and her brightest hopes. Success or reverse, victory or temporary defeat, is intimately bound up with the answer which she is preparing to give to God's providential summons.

When I speak, in these pages, of the responsibility of the Pastor, I am to be understood as referring to the Pastor personally. If, however, a church is without a Pastor, or is so large that all pastoral work cannot be performed by one man, then this responsibility may be properly devolved upon some subordinate officer of the Church, or upon a pastoral helper.

II.—PLEAS FOR RELIEF FROM RESPONSIBILITY.

Whatever may be true of the successful pastoral culture of child-piety in some branches of the Church, it cannot be said that, in the larger and more actively aggressive Protestant denominations of this country, such a system as our question contemplates has as yet found a fully

recognized place. It is not meant that the children are overlooked. The duty of caring for their religious and spiritual welfare is abundantly acknowledged and earnestly enforced; but not as a duty specially binding upon the Pastor in the way of direct personal oversight and labor. Individual Pastors, it is true, here and there, are eminently successful in leading the young to Christ and in bringing them into the Church. But these are looked upon as exceptionally gifted men, as truly so as natural bone-setters, or as mathematical prodigies, whom it would be idle and presumptuous for ordinary mortals to attempt to imitate.

While the true Christian Pastor acknowledges and feels the importance of the culture of piety among the children of his charge, he commonly excuses himself from taking a prominent personal part in this work for reasons like the following:

1. *The work does not really belong to him.* The child, it is judged, is to receive his religious training at home or in the Sunday-school, until he is old enough to grasp the truths as presented in the studied sermons of the pulpit, and thoughtful enough to apply them to his own spiritual needs. It is the privilege and the duty of the Pastor, it may be, to drop a few words of pious counsel for the young as he

pursues his round of parochial visitation, or, much more rarely than in former times, to gather them together occasionally for instruction in the catechism.

It deserves to be said also that some few ministers make it an essential part of their work, now and then, to address the children from the pulpit, either by adapting a part of the regular sermon to their needs, or by devoting to them an entire discourse. And still again, it is not unusual, when there is promise of a religious revival, for the Pastor to call in the assistance of a "children's preacher," and then to organize the younger converts into classes, that he may give them special instruction in the duties of a Christian life.

But it is not common, so far as I know, for the Pastor to regard it as an obligatory department of his *personal work* to institute and carry out, year by year, a system of training among the children, with a direct view to their early conversion, and their introduction into the Church. And this, not for want of a deep and tender interest in this portion of his charge, nor of a belief in the paramount importance and practicability of piety in early life, but because of a settled and almost universal conviction that the cultivation of this field is the appointed and exclusive function of parents, Sunday-school

teachers, and such others as are endowed with a special gift therefor.

2. The Pastor pleads also that with the pressing demand for finished pulpit discourses, in addition to the claims of the prayer-meeting, of funerals, of parochial visitation, and of numerous other calls both from within and from without his parish, *he has really no time* left for such special attention to the spiritual needs of the young as is here contemplated. If now we accept the ordinary allotment of the Pastor's working hours as the wisest and best for the interests of his flock, the plea is a just one. The demands made upon him in the spiritual oversight of the adults would seem to be sufficiently burdensome without the additional responsibility of personal care for children under fifteen years of age.

And then 3. Most Pastors feel that *they are utterly incompetent to this kind of work*,—that they cannot bring their minds down to its demands. They have no knack, no adaptation, no gift for interesting or teaching children. Their studies, their habits of thought, the objects which have engaged their energies have withdrawn them so far from this sphere of labor as quite to unfit them for it.

III.—THE ATTRACTIVE AND HOPEFUL NATURE OF
THE FIELD.

It would seem, at the first blush, that these reasons are sufficient to relieve the mind of the conscientious Pastor of any misgivings on the question of duty in leaving the spiritual care of the children entirely in other hands. But am I mistaken in judging this conclusion to be an unwarranted one? Are we not led almost instinctively to reject it? How can a theory of the Pastor's work be accepted as true or as Christian which so unreasonably limits his usefulness as a winner of souls, which cruelly, I had almost said, shuts him out of the most attractive and promising part of his parochial field, and a part most needing his intelligent personal tillage? I do not mean to imply that he is to assume the exclusive or entire responsibility of the religious training of the young. Nothing so preposterous. But, after all that parents and Christian lay teachers can effect, is he not called upon and qualified to give to the work the finishing touch, to even off inequalities, to complete what is partial, to supply radical deficiencies, to develop what is still in the germ, and to bring to maturity what is raw and crude?

Let us take a cursory view of the field which,

for the reasons alleged, the Pastor feels himself justified in declining to occupy.

Here it is relevant, in the first place, to inquire: At what period in the life of unconverted persons, from early childhood to the age of seventy, *are they most accessible and least shy in respect to efforts for their conversion?* If I mistake not, Christian workers will unhesitatingly answer: The period prior to the age of sixteen or seventeen. Pastors well know how difficult it usually is to engage unconverted young men and young women past the age of sixteen in free conversation upon the subject of personal religion,—how distant and reticent they are! And even when they are deeply thoughtful in respect to the soul's welfare, how reluctantly they acknowledge their convictions! Impenitent manhood is still more reserved; while impenitent old age is almost unapproachable to those who would seek its spiritual renovation. After childhood is passed, how seldom is it, except in times of revival, that an unconverted person holds himself open to the approach of his Pastor upon the question of Christian duty!

On the other hand, childhood is easily accessible. It has not as yet learned the habit of reserve and concealment. With judicious management, it offers its inmost nature to be

molded by the hand of Christian love and truth. It seeks to be taught the way of life, rather than taxes its ingenuity to avoid the teaching. It may be said, doubtless, that the reason why children are then more approachable is, that they are as yet superficial in their moral exercises,—that religious truth does not go down deep enough into their hearts to grapple with the depravity that is as yet only partially developed. But what if, in God's own plan, it is designed that a faithful Christian training shall antedate the full development of this latent evil, that thus the noxious elements which are waiting to germinate shall find the soil so far preoccupied by the graces of piety, as to be kept under in their growth and so doomed to die out?

And then, secondly, in estimating the character of this field of labor, may it not be affirmed that childhood is not only more approachable than any subsequent period of life, but also *more susceptible to impression*? Along with the hereditary depravity to which I have referred, there is that in human nature which responds most readily and tenderly to the claims of God's authority, to the divine truth, the divine love, and the divine grace in the cross. The conscience is sensitive; the aspirations are easily awakened for the true and the good; the

capacity of faith, not as yet contracted by betrayals, is proportionally large and active: the practice of vice has not as yet hardened the heart, nor sharpened the inventive faculty to manufacture excuses for neglect of duty or for deeds of mischief. The soil is mellow as it will never be again—not as yet a trampled-down wayside nor an overgrown thorn-hedge.

Here, then, is the attractive field all ready for the Pastor's occupation. It is easy of access and easy of tillage. If he was going to select the very best portion of the life of each of his parishioners for winning them to Christ, would he not make choice of childhood? True, parents are working in this field, and Sunday-school teachers also. But is there not something additional which he can do, and which he can often do better than they,—something necessary to fill out their work into completeness, something, in short, indispensable to prevent much that they do from proving nugatory? The promising elements of childhood will not survive their allotted period. They are for him to improve now,—now or never. And even though, with the lapse of this period, the season of hope may not have gone by forever, the best time for laying the foundations of a Christian character will have passed, and all subsequent efforts will be put forth at an irreparable disadvantage.

IV.—THE AGENCIES ORDINARILY RELIED UPON
DEFICIENT.

In discussing the subject of religious training, we should keep our eye steadily upon the true and proper end to be aimed at,—which is the leading of the children directly to Christ, their introduction into church fellowship, and their equipment for Christian duty,—in other words, the laying in their characters the foundations of an intelligent and devoted piety. If our aim stops short of this as *the immediate end* to be secured, if we seek to form them to good morals, to ground them in the doctrines of the catechism, to inculcate the saying of prayers, Scripture study, and respect for Christian worship, in the hope that, *by and by*, these means will prove effectual for their conversion, then these very means, however helpful with a more immediate and higher end in view, may result in ultimate spiritual damage. Nothing of a secondary character, though good in itself, should be allowed to work a diversion. And in the endeavor to secure this end, the very best instrumentality possible which the Church can furnish should be laid under contribution. No agency is too costly, no talents are of too high an order to be subsidized for this work, if needed to render it successful.

What, now, are the agencies commonly relied

upon to secure the Christian training of the children in our parishes? Are they sufficient? or do they need to be supplemented and completed by the labors of the Pastor? 1. The main reliance is, and should be, on the teachings, spirit, and example of *the Christian Home*. We have often looked, as with a kind of rapture, upon the ideal Christian Home, as it is pictured to us by the skillful artist upon the pages of the published essay, or in the glowing rhetoric of the pulpit and the platform. The parents are living embodiments of a Christlike piety; the tempers are sweet, the example without a blemish, the observance of religious duties faithful, and the whole family life consistent and beautiful; no vulgarity, no breach of truth or integrity, no intemperance of language or of appetite, no internal jars, no scandal in respect to neighbors,—a little kingdom where intelligence, fidelity, and love reign,—a very paradise regained. No matter if this is a work of the imagination. We love to gaze upon it. We are drawn tenderly toward the artist who has created it. It is much to know what a divine power for good the family was designed to be, and what it is qualified through God's grace to become. And it is blessed also to know that there are a few families in which at least some features of the ideal picture are

realized, and from which young men and women are going forth, year by year, who, by their purity of character and their consecrated intelligence, are making this world a brighter and better world to live in.

But excellent as is the training in this class of homes, there are very few children brought up in them who might not be essentially helped forward toward or in the Christian life by the teaching of the judicious Pastor. Many grow up, seemingly, from their earliest years to youth, in the love of God, who have never come to the full recognition of themselves as Christians and as proper candidates for church membership. Often there is a want of freedom on their part in speaking of their religious experiences, and often a want of wisdom on the part of parents in dealing with them ; both of which facts disqualify the parents for imparting just the counsel which the exigency demands. In such cases the teaching of the Pastor may supply deficiencies, and call out into conscious exercise those latent experiences and hopes in the young heart which, through ignorance or timidity, or through injudicious treatment, have been suppressed. And in other cases, where the influences of a good Christian home have not resulted in the conversion of a child, the superadded labors of the Pastor may be blessed to this result.

We have spoken thus much concerning home training at its very best—where it approaches the ideal. But what is its character as ordinarily conducted? In every hundred professedly Christian families, how many present any striking resemblance to the picture I have drawn? Twenty? Ten? Five? I dare not guess at the average. But that there are comparatively very few, would doubtless be the conclusion after a fair and discriminating canvass in our better class of parishes. Saddening moral delinquencies reveal themselves,—the passions are strong and wayward, the manners unlovely, the talk small and worldly, the life inconsistent, and what little religion there is, of a low type. In a large proportion of the households that are ordinarily classed as Christian, so much of unsanctified human nature holds sway as greatly to discourage our hopes in respect to their being nurseries of early piety. Here the Pastor's help is greatly needed.

Leaving now nominally Christian homes, our path leads us by a rapidly descending grade to the homes that are destitute of all positive religion,—godless, prayerless. In a few of them a tribute of profound outward respect is paid to the Bible, the sanctuary, and the teachings and duties of Christianity. Uprightness, truth, chastity, benevolence, and all the virtues of

morality are inculcated by example and precept. The radical defect is, there is no "Christ" in the household life, and of course no Christian nurture for the children. From this point we go down, step by step, to the loose in doctrine and the loose in life,—and from these to such as are still more loose, until we reach at last the immoral superlative, the valley of Hinnom, the sewer into which the filth and sediment of human nature pours itself; where the adults are either brutes or fiends, and the children vagabondish and homeless. In these depths of depravity, the parochial minister can hope to accomplish but little. A peculiar kind of self-denying labor is here required to accomplish any appreciable results. But in the higher ranges of non-Christian families, where survives more or less respect for religious truth and institutions, he will find a hopeful sphere of influence open to him and needing his earnest labors, where he will be likely to reap golden harvests, especially if reinforced by good lay-helpers.

2. Where the training of the household fails to result in the piety of the children, the *Sunday-school* promises to make good the deficiency. The sweep of this net, it is claimed, is wide enough and its meshes fine enough to inclose and gather in the little fishes that have their homes in the shallows of the great sea of human

life. And here, as above in the case of the Christian Household, we have a beautiful portrait held up for our admiration,—that of the ideal Sunday-school. And as we gaze upon it, our doubts at once yield to conviction. Our fears for the children are dissipated, our confidence in their timely and right religious culture perfectly assured. We see them in prospect all brought to Christ, duly instructed in Christian truth and duty, and introduced into the fellowship of the Church. And so pleasing is the picture that I am almost angry at hearing the suggestion that it is representative of what the Sunday-school *ought to be*, and of what we are praying and hoping it *may become*, rather than of what, in most cases, it actually is. God bless the Sunday-school for its rich history and its grand achievements, and for its still more glorious possibilities! God bless the self-denying toilers in this hopeful field of Christian endeavor! And especially God be praised for the example and successes of those who never “go forth” into this field without bringing back “their sheaves with them!” But of this class how many are there as compared with the whole number of Sunday-school workers? How many, let me ask the reader, among the twenty or fifty teachers in the school with which you are best acquainted? Put it in this way: “If the early

piety of the members of that school depended mainly on the Christian fidelity and prayers of the teachers, how many would be won in childhood to Christ and established in their discipleship?" While we rejoice and take courage in what this blessed institution is doing, we have as yet no warrant for concluding that it accomplishes all that for the children which the Church owes to them, or that there is no imperious call for the directing hand of the Pastor in their training. The routine hearing of lessons by many teachers and the crude instruction of others loudly call for his quickening and corrective touch, while the best work that is here done not seldom requires the finish which his mental equipment and experience qualify him to give.

3. It may be said, further, that many children are converted *in revivals, or through the labors of preachers or Christian workers specially qualified to awaken a religious interest among the young*. And in these seasons, which usually occur every few years in most of our parishes, it is hoped that those children who fail to begin the Christian life through home-training or Sunday-school teaching, will be reached by the saving power of the Gospel. We ought certainly to be grateful if any are truly brought to Christ by whatever instrumentality. We ought

not certainly to be so wedded to our own methods of work, or our theories of religion, as to prefer that souls should not be converted at all, rather than not to be converted according to our notions. At the same time, when the choice of means is in our own hands, we are bound to use those which in our judgment promise to be productive of the best results. It may relieve us of a sense of responsibility and of a burden of earnest labor to bring in an expert or a specialist now and then to work among the children, or to wait for a general revival. But is not such an alternative a reproach to the pastoral office? Whatever may be said in favor of special revival agencies for lifting men and women out of the ruts of a listless inertia, or a self-satisfied formalism, or for breaking the bondage of vicious habit, has no applicability to the case of children. They are at all times open to approach; they are tenderly susceptible; they are easily led, especially in groups. And a piety cultivated under the quiet and unforced training of the Christian Home, or of the Sunday-school, and crowned by the discriminating teachings of the Pastor, cannot but be more intelligent, healthful, and better balanced than a piety formed under the powerful stimulus of revival scenes. The religious nature of the young is in danger of being irrep-

arably injured by severe mental strains. Their tender sensibilities should be delicately touched and their religious affections called into exercise by gentle means, and not subjected to the violent wrenchings of strong popular movements.

V.—THE RESPONSIBILITY RECOGNIZED.

The question then comes back to us in this form: If it be true that the agencies commonly relied upon to secure the early conversion of our children and their proper religious training, are in large measure inadequate to that end, and in some respects objectionable in character, it would seem to follow that another and a higher agency is needed to supplement and complete this work, and to fit the subjects of it for their positions in the Church. And where shall this agency be found, except in a *judicious, faithful, and loving Pastorate*? It cannot, from the nature of the case, be true, as we have almost axiomatically assumed, that the Pastor has no mission to the children, except through the parents and the Sunday-school teacher and the specialist. The children correctly interpret the position he takes relative to their religious culture. They understand that they are not to come under his personal teaching until they approach adult years. This impression detracts largely from the benefit which they might other-

wise derive from his ministrations. "He is preaching to grown folks," they think, "and not to us"; and, as a consequence, the lesson is not taken home. And even when, now and then, he speaks directly to them, it is a thing so much out of the ordinary course, that although their interest is awakened, the wonder occasioned by the unusual service largely cancels the good designed and hoped for.

On the other hand, let him take upon his soul the responsibility, under God, of the early piety of the children of his charge, and let the pressure of this responsibility shape not only his public ministrations, but all his personal intercourse with the children and his labors in their behalf, and he will find an entire and wonderful change in their attitude toward him. Their susceptible hearts will open to him, and he will at once recognize in them a portion of his pastoral field the most urgent of all others in its claims, the most attractive in the end to be sought, the most hopeful of good results; and if he is in full sympathy with his Master, he will find his heart going out after these lambs of his flock with an overflowing devotion to their spiritual welfare. His mind will be fruitful of plans of work. The plea of a want of time will somehow dispose of itself. There will be a new division of his working hours. And very likely,

this breathing of the fresh and exhilarating atmosphere of childhood, instead of exhausting the vigor necessary to his ordinary preparations for the pulpit, will impart to them an unwonted ease, grace, and power.

And with regard to the plea, that by reason of his profounder studies he has incapacitated himself for meeting the demands of childhood, the probabilities are that these demands will call into action qualifications whose discovered possession will be a glad surprise to him, just as the first baby wakes into exercise in the young parents the aptitude and tact needful for its proper care. It is undoubtedly true that some men are better adapted to instruct the young than others, just as some men can preach more effectively to adults than others. It is not always remembered that the little people do not like to be addressed in that style of language called "children's talk." They readily understand the vernacular of every-day family life. We may talk to them in the same language that we use in familiar conversation with adults, with perhaps a freer use of metaphor and illustration, and an intonation more gentle and winning. The minister who is qualified to be the father of a household is qualified to be a Pastor to the lambs of Christ's flock. There are, therefore, very few cases, perhaps none, where, if the re-

sponsibility is felt, as it should be, and the heart answers cheerfully to the claims of duty, the requisite qualifications for this field of service will not be brought into easy and successful play.

VI.—METHODS OF WORK.

The discussion of this subject will not be complete without some practical suggestions in respect to the methods of pastoral work among the young. I remark then,

1. That in this, as in every other department of the Pastor's work, he must, in order to be successful, in great measure *shape the details of his own plan*. No one can do his best in another man's harness, or according to another man's rules. After some little experience and probably some failures, he will be likely to select such methods as are best adapted to his own peculiar capabilities and the character of his field of labor. With regard to the gathering of the children into classes as catechumens, and the conduct of such classes, which includes a most hopeful branch of a Pastor's work among the young, the following suggestions are offered,—as suggestions merely.

2. His ultimate success will largely depend upon *his standing among the little folks*,—what they think of him. Is he stern and forbidding

on the one hand, or destitute of all seriousness and dignity on the other? Is he easy in his approach to them, and easily approachable by them? Do his manners betray a loving interest in their welfare? Do his glistening eyes, and the warm pressure of his hand, and his cordial greeting call forth a ready response as he meets them in the house or by the way? Let the conviction take possession of their minds that the good minister loves them, and clay is scarcely more plastic to the molding hand of the potter than their hearts to his teaching.

3. Although children are not naturally shy and reticent on the subject of personal religion like older people, *they shrink from too close questioning*. They do not like to be cornered and put under the fire of a searching examination,—not so much because they wish to conceal their feelings as because of embarrassment. They have not as yet learned by self-reflection to discriminate between different mental experiences either to your satisfaction or their own. There is a better way of dealing with them. By keeping open an easy, natural intercourse with them, avoiding all set technical methods, directing their minds more to the objective realities of religion and less to its inward experiences, you will readily learn their true spiritual condition and receive light as to the

proper counsel to be given them. Begin with them in groups. The Pastor can gather twenty into his parlor with a view to be organized into a class for religious instruction, where he could get one to meet him in a private interview. As the interest grows, opportunities for such personal conversation with individuals as their cases may demand will readily be found.

4. In the organization of the class, it should be distinctly understood that *the single object* is to teach the way of salvation: to show *what it is* and *how* to be a Christian and to live a Christian life. The Pastor finds occasion, from time to time, to enlist the attention of his young people in questions of moral reform, or in studies for mental improvement. But when he invites them to meet with him as Christian inquirers, he is to keep this one object before him. He is to point out, they are to learn, the way of life.

5. *The gathering and organizing of the class* will not probably be so difficult a matter as might by some be anticipated. The time chosen for such an effort is a point of some importance. A season of unusual religious seriousness in the parish offers a specially favorable opportunity. But whether or not such seriousness exists, the Pastor will ordinarily find the autumn or early winter the best time of the year to begin the

movement. There are then fewer out-of-door diversions, and the mind is in better tone for serious thinking. The week of prayer marks a good starting-point.

In the way of preparation for the effort, let the Pastor make out a list of the children of his parish between the ages of ten and sixteen, with a view of organizing so many of them as he may think best into the class for weekly instruction. Let him enlist the assistance of the parents and the Sunday-school teachers in his object. He will need the right kind of a helper, an efficient and devoted young Christian, — lady or gentleman. The one selected should be a favorite with the children, and qualified to aid him in the gathering of the class, and at the meetings, in the way of singing and prayer and moral influence. The place for the meeting should not be a lecture-room or chapel; and ordinarily, it should not be a public room at all. It should rather be a private parlor, where the atmosphere and associations are those of a free social gathering, and not of a set religious service. And when the preparations are all made, the Pastor may give notice from the pulpit, that at such a time and place he will be happy to meet so many of the children and young people as desire to become Christians, and to be taught how to begin and how to maintain a

Christian life. Special urgency to secure attendance should ordinarily be avoided. Those who come should come voluntarily, as if it were a privilege, and not out of obedience to parents or of courtesy to the minister.

Quite probably the first meeting will be small. But let there be no indications of disappointment. Give as cheerful and attractive an air as possible to the services, which should be not over thirty minutes in length. Invite those present to come again next week, and to bring their companions with them. In the course of two or three weeks your class will be fully organized.

6. As to *the best kind and order of service* in these meetings, each Pastor will easily decide for himself. The following outline has been proved by use to be well adapted to the case:

1. Reading of a very few verses of Scripture.
2. Singing.
3. Brief prayer by the Pastor or his helper.
4. Repetition of a passage of Scripture by each member of the class upon the subject of the lesson—the passages having been given out on slips of paper at the preceding meeting.
5. Singing of a stanza or two.
6. Lesson by the Pastor.
7. Repetitive prayer in which all are expected to join.
8. Doxology.

Each part should be adapted to engage and hold the attention; the whole service, as a

rule, not to exceed forty or forty-five minutes in length.

7. As to *the lesson*. Each lesson should have for its design the illustration and enforcement of the duty of entering upon the Christian life, or of maintaining such a life, from some specific point of view, as, for example, from the point of repentance, or of faith, or of prayer. And although it may be desirable that there should be in the successive lessons a progress from the elementary duties to those which belong to the more mature experiences of piety, each lesson should be a complete whole in itself, so that, in order to understand it, the memory need not be burdened with what has gone before, and also that persons only present occasionally may find the way of life clearly opened to them. Facts and illustrations may be freely used, yet not in such profusion as to produce a surfeit, and thus to interpose mere intellectual entertainment between the minds of the pupils and the truth to be enforced.

The lessons herein given are in the form of catechism-questions and answers. Catechisms have always deservedly held a prominent place in religious teaching. But when, as in these classes, the one object is to lead the children directly to Christ as a Saviour, discrimination should be used, so as to disallow any influence

which may operate as a hindrance to the attainment of this object. Let a child, for example, pore anxiously over a catechism lesson, let his memory be taxed to learn and retain, and his understanding to grasp some great religious truth, and it will be found that this mental stress will largely cancel all endeavors to render that truth practically effective in immediate results. It will also have lost much of its freshness to his mind, and, quite probably, much of its power. The lesson should be given out beforehand, and each child required to memorize an assigned text of Scripture appropriate to the theme, and perhaps also the answer to one or more leading questions in the lesson. Beyond this, it is not usually advisable to press our demands. Let the matter be so arranged, as that while a sense of responsibility is felt for making some proper preparation for the lesson, the pupils shall not be thrown into a state of discomfort by a consciousness of neglect on the one hand, or by a fear of failure in their recitations on the other. They should be put perfectly at their ease, and a state of trustful dependence upon the Pastor for instruction and for impression should be cherished. He then coming before them, highly charged with the truth, dispenses it to them in simple, loving, and forceful language out of his own divinely-filled personality. He

is not there to teach the truth in the form of doctrinal propositions to be proved by arguments. He uses the Catechism as a prompter to his own mind. He is to conceive of himself as God's organ of spiritual communication with these young hearts, and of God as speaking through his personality concerning their present duty. And if he can make that conception a living reality both to himself and to them, his utterances will take them captive, and win them to a cheerful acceptance of Christ. As the prophet brought back life into the dead child by the direct contact of his mouth with the child's mouth, of his eyes with the child's eyes, and of his hands with the child's hands, so here, under God, the personal factor of the teacher's consecrated heart brought into loving contact with the hearts of his pupils is the vehicle through which the blessing may be expected. It is evident, therefore, that the introversion and taxing of the pupil's mind in recalling, to any large extent, the words of a catechism, especially if the pupil be quite young, might interpose a hindrance to this result. At the same time, the Pastor will find it helpful in awakening a sympathetic interchange of feeling between himself and the members of his class to propose questions to them on leading points in the lesson. Of the manner and

frequency of doing this he himself must be the judge.

It is not designed in what has been said to disparage in the least the catechism-form of instruction, or to discourage its use. I would rather enhance its importance and restore it, if possible, to its old-time prominence in the family and in the parish. It has this special advantage, that it makes the particular points of a doctrine or a duty stand out more boldly, and in this respect is as helpful to the teacher in imparting, as to the pupil in gathering instruction. While, therefore, I have suggested caution with regard to taxing the minds of children, where a special effort is directed to *immediate practical results*, I would strongly recommend, as one of the most important modes of religious instruction, that, as an established usage, they be required to memorize and recite some catechism outlining the fundamental doctrines and duties of Christianity—as well children of immature years as those who have advanced beyond the elementary stage of religious inquiry. And I confess to a hope, that in the series of lessons contained in this work, parents and Bible-class teachers, as well as Pastors, may find a manual serviceable to this end.

In the preparation of these lessons, the aim

has been to render them simple in language, precise in thought, and concise in expression. Exception may be taken in respect to the style as being too elevated for use in the instruction of children, inasmuch as many words are used whose meaning the younger catechumens will not apprehend without explanation. The exception is well taken, if it is not borne in mind that these lessons always presuppose a competent teacher. If the simplification could have been carried so far as to bring the truths taught within the easy apprehension of a child of nine or ten years, which is doubtful, the necessary explanations and illustrations would have required five times the space actually here occupied. And the apparent gain would probably have caused a sacrifice of accuracy and precision. While, therefore, simplicity has been sought, the lessons have been prepared mainly as suggestive aids to the teacher, with a view to place before him an intelligible outline of the Scriptural teachings on each given subject. He is supposed to be the competent expounder of so much of these teachings as he chooses to use. As a worker in this field, the author bears this testimony from his own experience, that in a three or five minutes' talk, he can give to a child as clear a *practical* idea of the meaning of the word Regeneration, cou-

fessedly a hard word, as of the word Faith, an easy word; or of the word Reciprocity as of the word Pride. I offer no objection to children's catechisms. They are of great value in family and infant-school instruction. But they would prove inadequate to the uses of a Pastor's training-class.

There are not more than one or two of these lessons which does not embrace too wide a range of topics for single sessions of a children's class. But, as has been suggested, it is easy for the Pastor to select such particular questions as will best answer his purpose. While it is not wise to attempt to cover too much ground at one time, it is not certainly wise on the other hand to weary the little folks with minute theological analysis or the turning over and over of single thoughts. They want truth in the concrete, and they want variety; and a good deal of ground may be profitably gone over in twenty minutes. The closing up of the lesson is a matter of great importance. With no aim at what may be called a sensation, the close should be tender and winning, adapted in the spirit of childlike gentleness to draw the heart to an immediate acceptance of the truth.

8. The service reaches its climax in *the responsive or rather repetitive prayer* which follows the lesson. The truth has been explained,

the duty enforced, the heart's full assent is wanted, and wanted *now*. Can anything be done wisely to secure this result beyond what has been done by the teaching of the lesson? Shall the members of the class be persuaded to put their names to a written covenant or promise that they will henceforth live a Christian life? Shall they be invited to raise their hands, or to kneel to be prayed for in token of such a purpose? Such measures as these, however expedient or helpful in the case of older persons and in other circumstances, may easily ensnare a child into self-deception and error. Let him rather be brought right into the presence of God. While the impressions produced by the truth are still vivid and deep, let the hopes and fears, the desires and purposes awakened find appropriate expression in direct address to God in prayer.

In accordance with this idea, the sentiments of the lesson are gathered up into a prayer made ready by the Pastor, which he reads to the class, remarking as he does so: "I have prepared just such a prayer as you might properly offer if you were disposed to put into practice the teachings I have been giving you. Now listen while I read it, that you may know exactly what this prayer is, and that you may avoid expressing any desires to God which you cannot

offer up to Him with a sincere heart. If you can truly adopt the prayer as your own, repeat it sentence by sentence after me." All then kneel, and the Pastor reverently and distinctly dictates the first sentence. They responsively repeat it in concert. Then the second sentence is similarly dictated and repeated ; and so on to the " Amen "—the prayer being so constructed as easily to admit of these divisions.

One who has never taken part in such a service can hardly imagine its impressive tenderness and power. A group of young yearning hearts led to the mercy-seat by the hand of intelligent love ! The deep hush of reverence broken only by the uttered petitions of the double-fold prayer ! The solemn bass of the leader followed by its echo of gentle and tremulous responses from the blending voices of his pupils ! When the prayer is concluded, and all rise to their feet again, is there not a reasonable ground of hope, that impressions are made that will ripen into good spiritual fruitage ? Some of the children may have joined the class in a raw, undeveloped state in respect to their religious knowledge and perceptions. But they cannot well be subjected to this kind of training, week after week, without being lifted up into a new and spiritual atmosphere which will prove a power of life to the soul. And in respect to such

as have been brought up in Christian homes, it is hardly presumptuous to predict that they will come into conscious fellowship with God as their Father, and with the Lord Jesus Christ as their Light and Life.

9. *Two or three minor questions* remain for consideration. It may be asked,—*How long shall a series of these meetings be continued?* I should answer: Not more than three months. Thirteen consecutive meetings well prepared for, judiciously conducted, and packed as full of interest as possible, are better for the Pastor's influence over the children than fifty-two. Beginning soon after the week of prayer, as has been suggested, they would close about the middle of April, in good time to gather into the Church those of them who possess the requisite qualifications on the first Sabbath in May. This ingathering should come immediately at the close of the meeting, and constitute the crowning part of the whole work. In rural communities, or where the population is sparse and scattered, some other season than the winter doubtless would be preferable. But whatever be the season chosen, there should, from the first, be a looking forward to this garnering of the precious harvest. There will probably in every class be some, in respect to whom it will be judged best that they should

delay awhile making a public profession of their faith. Such should be billeted for another course of instruction, and meanwhile tenderly watched over. And those who are received into the church should by no means be treated as if they had completed their course of religious training. In order that they may grow, and be fruitful and honor their profession, they stand in constant need of counsel and help from the church and the Pastor.

Another inquiry relates to the expediency of organizing this training service for the children *every year or less frequently*. This point is at once settled by determining whether the parish furnishes the materials for such a service every year. If there are children that need to be led to Christ and trained to the duties of piety, the responsibility of the Pastor for them suffers no intermission. This responsibility cannot be dissevered from his office. FOR BE IT NEVER FORGOTTEN, THAT IN THE DIVINE PLAN, THE CULTURE OF CHILD-PIETY STANDS FIRST IN IMPORTANCE IN FURNISHING THE MATERIALS OUT OF WHICH THE CHURCH, GOD'S SPIRITUAL TEMPLE, IS TO BE BUILT UP IN THE WORLD.

PART SECOND.

LESSONS FOR CATECHUMENS ON THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES AND DUTIES OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE, WITH APPROPRIATE PRAYERS ATTACHED FOR REPETITIVE USE.

NOTE.—This series of Lessons has been used in the instruction of a class of children from eleven to sixteen years of age with the happiest results. It embraces the more fundamental practical truths which pertain to the Christian life. The method of instruction and the use to be made of the prayers have been sufficiently explained in the preceding pages (see pp. 32–37). The Lessons are published not as models, but as aids, in the way of suggestion, to those on whom rests the responsibility of feeding the Lambs of Christ's flock. In form they assume at the outset that the catechumens under instruction are in the attitude of inquirers in respect to the way of life. Where classes, therefore, are made up, in whole or in part, of such as give evidence of being true disciples,

care should be taken that they be not addressed as though they were impenitent, and thus distrust be cast upon their professions of piety. Such may be wisely and profitably taught all the Lessons which treat of the evil of sin, and the necessity of a new heart, and the duty of immediate repentance, if it be done in a way to deepen their experience and perfect their knowledge of Christian truth, and not so as to put them back or to discourage them in their endeavors to follow Christ as their already chosen Lord and Master.

LESSON I.

AWAKENING.

1. What is it to become a Christian ?

It is to become a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ as my Saviour, and a follower of him, as my Lord and Master.

Acts xi. 26.

2. From what source alone can you learn the truth on this subject ?

From the Bible, which should be studied daily with a teachable spirit, and with earnest prayer for light.

Acts xvii. 11; John xx. 31; James i. 5.

3. For what reasons do you regard it as your duty to begin a Christian life ?

Because it is right in itself as a coming to my right mind; because God commands it; and because my own welfare both for the present and for the eternal future demands it.

Luke xv. 17; 1 Tim. i. 15; Acts xvii. 30;
1 Tim. iv. 8.

4. What encouragements have you in entering upon this work ?

God's love in the sacrifice of Christ; the fullness and freeness of the provisions of the Gospel; the assurances of God's ability and willingness to save; and the testimony of multitudes of Christ's disciples to the value of his service.

John iii. 16; Rev. xxii. 17; 2 Peter iii. 9; 1 John i. 3.

5. What effort is necessary on your part in becoming a Christian ?

I am to ask, to seek, to knock; to strive; to deny myself and take up my cross; to take the yoke of Christ upon me; to cut off the offending right hand, and pluck out the offending right eye.

Matt. vii. 7-11; Luke xiii. 24; Matt. xvi. 24, xi. 29; Mark ix. 43-48.

6. What reasons urge you to the immediate performance of this duty ?

The fact that now is the day of salvation; and that delay hardens the heart, provokes God, and imperils the soul.

2 Cor. vi. 2; Luke xii. 20; Prov. xxix. 1.

7. Is it wise for you beforehand to mark out the experience you are to pass through in becoming a Christian ?

It is not; inasmuch as I cannot form a correct judgment of a change through which I have never passed.

2 Kings v. 11; Isa. xlii. 16; Heb. xi. 8.

8. What attitude of mind then should you take in the case?

Implicitly to follow the teachings of the Bible, as the medium through which God's Spirit works in the renewal of the heart.

Psa. cxix. 105; James i. 18.

9. Will your efforts to become a Christian be likely to succeed if your design is merely to make an experiment of a religious life?

No; for success follows only when the mind is fully committed to the work.

Hosea vi. 4; Luke xiv. 28-33.

10. Should not your own weakness make you hesitate to commit yourself fully to the performance of your duty?

No; for none that look to God for his help ever fail.

Mark. ix. 24; Isa. xl. 29-31.

11. What are the principal means you are to employ in this work?

The diligent study of the word of God; earnest and frequent prayer; attendance upon social and public worship; and the counsel of Christian teachers.

Heb. iv. 12; Psa. cxix. 9, 145; Acts xiv. 1, xvi. 30, 31, viii. 31.

12. What should be especially avoided?

All levity, and all associations, employments,
and books that tend to divert my thoughts
from the care of my soul.

Prov. iv. 14-16 ; Eccl. ix. 18, xi. 9 ;

Mark iv. 19.

13. Are you fully decided now to enter upon a
Christian life?

PRAYER.

O Lord, my heavenly Father,
I desire to live a Christian life.
Thou dost bid me seek thy face:
Help me to answer—Thy face, Lord, will I seek.
I confess that I have walked the ways of sin.
Turn my feet, I pray thee,
into the paths of wisdom and peace.
I mourn that my time has run to waste;
that my talents have been misused;
that the care of my soul has been neglected.
Oh! how good thou art,
that thou hast not cast me off;
that thou art still willing to pardon!
Blessed Jesus, I would seek thee now.
I would seek thee with my whole heart.
I would seek thee so as to find thee.
Oh, help me lest I faint and fail.
Make my path light.
Give me a true and childlike faith;
and work in me to do thy will.
And thine shall be the glory. Amen.

LESSON II.

CONVICTION.

1. Of what terrible truth do you need a conviction, in order that you may fully realize the necessity of a Christian life?

That I am a sinner.

Job xlii. 5, 6; Psa. xl. 12; Rom. v. 12;
vii. 24; John xvi. 8, 9.

2. What constitutes sin?

Contrariety to God's righteous law, considered either as the great law of love; as the law of my moral being; or, as the law given at Mount Sinai.

Matt. xxii. 36-39; Rom. iii. 19-23, xiii.
8-10.

3. What two forms of sin should be distinguished from one another?

Actual or specific sins; and sin as a state of the heart, from which actual sins proceed as streams from a fountain.

Matt. xii. 33-35; Mark vii. 21-23.

4. What is sin as a state of the heart?

It is a controlling spirit of rebellion against God's authority—a settled estrangement from him as the supreme lawgiver and father.

Jer. xvii. 9, 10; Job xxi. 14; John xv. 24, 25; Rom. viii. 7.

5. What are actual or specific sins?

They are transgressions of God's commandments in thought, word, or deed, either by omission or commission.

Matt. xv. 19; 1 John iii. 4; Gal. v. 19-21.

6. Are all sins alike in the degree of their guilt?

No. Some sins, being committed against greater light, and in a bolder spirit of defiance to God's authority, are much more heinous than others.

Matt. xi. 21-24; Luke xii. 47, 48; John xv. 22.

7. What are your easily besetting sins?

Those which, by reason of my peculiar temperament, my associations, or my employments, I am most strongly tempted to commit.

Heb. xii. 1.

8. What does sin deserve?

God's utter displeasure, and, unless repented of and forsaken, an eternal punishment at his hands.

Matt. xxv. 41-46; Rom. ii. 5-9.

9. Does insensibility to sin prove the absence of sin, or constitute an excuse for it?

It does not. The fact that a man is so hardened that he does not realize his guilt is an evidence of the depth of his depravity.

1 Tim. iv. 2; Zech. vii. 12; Matt. xiii. 15.

10. Does outward correctness of conduct and life prove that you are free from sin?

By no means. Under the cover of a fair exterior there may be secret sin greatly offensive to God.

Matt. xxiii. 25-28; Acts viii. 21-23.

11. What effects does persistence in sin produce?

It hardens my heart; enslaves me to evil habits; increases my alienation from God; and renders my conversion less and less probable.

Heb. iii. 12, 13; Rom. vi. 12, 13; Matt. xii. 45.

12. What must be the final issue of unrepented sin?

Irremediable ruin of character, happiness, hopes, and all the vital interests of my being.

Rom. vi. 21, 23; James i. 15.

13. What is the sin that hath never forgiveness? That wilful sin, which so resists the reclaiming grace of God, that the sinner becomes insensible to his need of forgiveness, and utterly indisposed to seek it.

Mark iii. 29; Heb. x. 26, 27; 1 John v. 16.

14. Are you entitled to hope for salvation unless you sympathize with God in his abhorrence of sin?

I am not. I must hate sin or I cannot be saved.

Psa. xcvi. 10; Jer. xlv. 4; Rev. xxi. 27.

15. What, then, is your first and most urgent duty?

To seek deliverance from sin through the help offered me by God, and in the way appointed by him.

Isa. i. 16, 17, lv. 7; Luke xv. 21, xviii. 13.

16. Can you cleave to any one sinful indulgence, however small, and secure God's saving help?

I cannot. A single sin cherished, forever bars me out of the kingdom of God.

PRAYER.

Have pity upon me, O Lord, in my sin.
Thou hast been a loving father to me :
but I have shown myself a wayward child.
Oh ! how wickedly have I abused thy mercy !
How many times broken thy commandments !
And for this I deserve thy wrath and curse.
But, O God, forgive me for Jesus' sake.
Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity ;
and cleanse me from my sin.
Lord Jesus, thou knowest my sore need.
Thou understandest my great peril.
A wicked heart tempts me astray.
The world allures me into evil.
Extend thine arm for my deliverance,
or I shall perish in my guilt.
Help me to renounce all sin.
Set my feet in the right path ;
and make me faithful to the end.
I ask all in thy dear name. Amen.

LESSON III.

SALVATION.

1. What was the end for which the Lord Jesus Christ came into this world?

To save men from sin and from its fearful consequences.

Matt. i. 21; 1 John iii. 5.

2. Who is the Lord Jesus Christ?

He is the eternal Son of God who, in the person of the son of Mary, assumed our human nature, and in that nature accomplished our redemption.

John i. 14; Gal. iv. 4, 5; Heb. ii. 14-17.

3. How has he contributed, by his life and teachings, to work out our redemption?

By clearly manifesting the love and holiness of God, he has given a perfect example of what my character ought to be, and of what, through grace, it may become.

John i. 18; 2 Cor. iii. 18; Phil. ii. 5-9.

4. How, by his sufferings and death?

He has offered himself as a sacrifice for our sins, and made an atonement through which I may be justified before God and

reconciled to him, without any dishonor to his holy law.

Romans iii. 23-26; v. 6-10.

5. By what forms of expression do the Scriptures set forth the atoning efficacy of Christ's sufferings and death?

As an offering and a sacrifice to God; a propitiation for sin; a ransom for all; the Lamb slain for us; our Passover sacrificed for us; our Redeemer through blood; sin for us; a curse for us.

Eph. v. 2; 1 John ii. 2; 1 Tim. ii. 6;
Rev. vii. 14; 1 Cor. v. 7; 1 Pet. i.
18, 19; 2 Cor. v. 21; Gal. iii. 13.

6. What saving benefits flow from Christ's resurrection from the dead, and his exaltation to the right hand of the Father?

He has conquered death and Satan; he has become head over all things to his church; he has poured out the Holy Spirit upon believers; and has entered upon his office as their Intercessor.

Acts ii. 33-35; Eph. i. 19-22; Rom.
viii. 34; Heb. vii. 25.

7. Is it possible by any charities, prayers, or sufferings of yours to add to the efficacy of Christ's saving work?

It is not.

Isa. lv. 1; Rom. x. 3; Heb. x. 14.

8. Is this salvation free to all ?

Yes; free as offered to all, and free as bestowed upon all who by a personal faith accept it.

Rev. xxii. 17; John vii. 37.

9. Is it sufficient for the salvation of the unwor-
thiest ?

It is. None who apply are rejected on account of their vileness.

Mark ii. 17; John vi. 37; 1 Tim. i. 15, 16.

10. Is there any other possible method of salvation ?

There is none.

Acts iv. 12.

11. How long does the opportunity of securing this salvation remain open ?

Not beyond death. By reason of aggravated sin, probation may practically end before death.

2 Cor. v. 10; Heb. ix. 27; Mat. xxiii. 32, 33, 37, 38; 1 John v. 16.

12. Can you, then, safely postpone accepting Christ till to-morrow ?

I cannot. I hazard the interests of my soul by the briefest delay.

Prov. xxvii. 1.

13. Measuring the value of your soul by the price Christ paid for its redemption, what must that value be?

Infinite, immeasurable.

1 Peter i. 18, 19.

14. Must not the refusal to believe on Christ be a sin of the most aggravated nature?

Yes ; the sin of all sins—the only sin that shuts the door of mercy on those to whom the Gospel is made known.

John iii. 18, 19; xvi. 9.

PRAYER.

Heavenly Father, I praise thee,
that thou didst give thine only begotten Son,
that sinners might be saved.
I praise thee for the freeness of this salvation;
and for its infinite fullness.
Thanks to thee, O thou Son of God,
that thou didst willingly offer thyself
a sacrifice for my redemption ;
that when there was no other eye to pity me,
thine eye pitied ;
that when no created arm could save me,
thou didst come to save.
By thy life and teachings,
by thy sufferings and death,
by thy resurrection and ascension,
thou hast opened the way of life.
I would from this hour, Lord Jesus,
trust thee as my Saviour.
Accept me and seal me as thine,—
thine now and thine forever.
And to thee shall be the glory. Amen

LESSON IV.

REGENERATION.

1. If left to themselves, would the hearers of the Gospel accept the salvation through Christ therein made known and offered?

They would not. This salvation needs to be applied to their hearts by the Spirit of grace.

John vi. 44; 1 Cor. iii. 7.

2. What is regeneration?

It is that inward work of divine grace by which the heart is changed, and a holy disposition wrought in us. It is having the image of Christ formed in the soul.

Titus iii. 5; Gal. iv. 19.

3. By what terms is regeneration described in the Scriptures?

As being born of the Spirit; as being begotten and being born of God; as being made partakers of the divine nature; as being quickened; as receiving a new heart; as

having Christ revealed in us; and as being created anew in Christ Jesus.

John iii. 8; 1 John v. 1; 2 Pet. i. 4;
Eph. ii. 1, 5; Ezek. xxxvi. 26; Gal. i.
15, 16; Eph. ii. 10.

4. What do you say of the necessity of this change?

It is absolutely necessary to my peace; to my entering into the kingdom of God; and to my ultimate victory over sin and hell.

John iii. 5-7.

5. Does regeneration involve the suspension of your moral agency, or the bestowment of new faculties upon you?

No. It simply restores my perverted faculties to their proper exercise and use.

Phil. ii. 12.

6. Ought you to wait until you feel the movement of divine grace within you before accepting Christ as your Saviour?

No. For this grace works so perfectly in harmony with my own moral agency, that I cannot distinguish between the divine working and my own willing and doing.

Revelation iii. 20.

7. What state of mind then should you cherish if you would receive the gift of a new heart?

I must sacredly cherish all desires for this gift, and while realizing the divine sovereignty, I must seek and ask for a new heart, just as earnestly as if the obtaining of it depended wholly on my own efforts. God helps those only who are earnest in helping themselves.

Ezek. xxxvi. 26, xviii. 31; Psa. li. 10;
Eph. ii. 8.

8. What are the evidences of regeneration?

Hatred of sin; repentance; faith; and love to God and my neighbor.

Eph. ii. 10, iv. 23-32; 1 John iii. 9,
10, v. 4.

9. Through what instrumentalities does God's Spirit work in effecting this change?

Through the word and worship of God; the works of creation; the events of Providence; the chidings of conscience; and the warnings and counsels of Christian love.

James i. 18; 1 Pet. i. 23; Luke xv. 14;
James v. 19, 20.

10. Are not those who stifle their convictions of duty guilty of resisting the Spirit?

They are.

Acts vii. 51; Hebrews iii. 7, 8.

11. Into what new relations does regeneration bring you?

By it I become a child of God and an heir of eternal life.

Romans viii. 14-17; Eph. i. 5.

12. Do you sincerely desire, and are you earnestly seeking for, the gift of a renewed heart?

PRAYER.

Teach me, O Lord, how weak I am against sin.
When I would do good, evil is present with me.
Thou hast provided a free salvation.
Forbid that I should fail of obtaining it.
Grant grace to help in this hour of need.
I know that I must be born again,
or I cannot see the kingdom of God.
Divine Spirit, work in me this great change.
Take away the stony heart,
and give me a heart of flesh.
May Christ's yoke henceforth be easy,
and his burden light to me.
I hang all my hopes on thy mercy.
Lord, save or I perish. Amen.

LESSON V.

REPENTANCE.

1. What relative position did John Baptist, Christ and the Apostles, in their teachings, give to repentance?

They gave it the first place.

Matt. iii. 1, 2, iv. 17; Acts ii. 38 iii. 19.

2. What is repentance?

It is sincere sorrow for sin as committed against God, accompanied by a full purpose to forsake it and serve God. It aims not only at the putting away of specific sins, but chiefly the sin of the heart.

Ezek. xviii. 30; Acts xxvi. 20; 2 Cor. vii. 10.

3. What forms of religious experience are practically included in it?

Conviction, or a sense of sin; contrition, or a feeling of grief and humiliation on account of sin; and conversion, or a turning from sin to God.

Job xl. 4, xlii. 6; Psa. xl. 12; Acts xx. 21.

4. Is true repentance always attended by an honest confession of sin to God?

It is.

Psa. xxxii. 5, li. 3; Proverbs xxviii. 13;
1 John i. 9.

5. Is repentance always attended also by a readiness to make full reparation for wrongs done to our neighbor?

It is.

Ezek. xxxiii. 15; Luke xix. 8.

6. Does cleaving to any known sin vitiate repentance?

It does.

Ezek. xviii. 31; James ii. 10.

7. What is the evidence of the genuineness of your repentance?

The fruits of piety and righteousness in my life.

Matt. iii. 8; 2 Cor. vii. 11.

8. When does God command you to repent?

Now.

Acts xvii. 30.

9. Need repentance be delayed for want of clearer views or deeper convictions?

Not a moment. For in an immediate and honest effort to discharge my duty, all such supposed deficiencies, if real, will be supplied.

Matt. xii. 20, xxv. 29.

10. Do you need to repent daily?

I do.

John xiii. 10; Heb. iii. 13.

11. What wonderful change does repentance effect in your spiritual state and relations?

It opens to me the door into the higher, or spiritual life. It is repentance unto life.

Acts xi. 18.

12. Name some scriptural examples of genuine repentance.

Job; David; Manasseh; The Publican; The Prodigal Son; and Peter.

Job xlii. 5, 6; 2 Sam. xii. 13; Psal. li.;

2 Chron. xxxiii. 12, 13; Luke xv.

17-21, xviii. 13, xxii. 61, 62.

13. Name some examples of false repentance.

Pharaoh; Balaam; Achan; Saul; and Judas.

Exod. ix. 27, x. 16, 17; Numb. xxii. 34;

Josh. vii. 20; 1 Sam. xv. 24, 25;

Matt. xxvii. 3-5.

14. Can any good reason be given why you should not repent now?

No.

Josh. xxiv. 15; Ezek. xviii. 31.

PRAYER.

Holy Father, I confess with shame,
that I have been a great sinner.
I have transgressed thy commandments;
I have abused thy mercy:
I have trifled with the interests of my soul
Thy long-suffering has been wonderful.
Canst thou forgive me, O my Father?
Canst thou blot out the terrible record?
I own that I deserve thy displeasure.
But oh, receive thy returning prodigal,
and turn not away my humble prayer.
I would sorrow after a godly sort.
I would forsake every sin.
Strengthen me to live a new life,
and deliver me from all evil.

I ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

LESSON VI.

FAITH.

1. Is faith in the historical facts, or the doctrines of Christianity, the faith which the Scriptures make the condition of salvation?

No ; for such a faith is an act of the intellect and not of the heart.

Acts xxvi. 26, 27; James ii. 19, 20.

2. What is justifying or saving faith ?

It is the act by which I, a sinful being, fully and forever commit myself in trust to another being, Jesus Christ, as a Saviour. Before the coming of Christ, this faith had God, as then revealed, for its object.

Acts xvi. 31; Rom. iv. 3-9.

3. What state of mind does this act of commitment imply ?

A sense of my sin and danger as a sinner, and a full belief in the ability and willingness of Christ to save me.

1 Tim. i. 15; Heb. vii. 25.

4. Are you warranted to believe that Christ is able and willing to save *you* in particular?

Yes; for the offers of salvation are to all, and I am as truly included, as if I was personally named.

Rev. xxii. 17.

5. Is it your privilege to exercise faith in Christ *now* in the assurance that you will be accepted?

It is; for he declares, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out," and Paul teaches, that "now is the accepted time."

John vi. 37; 2 Cor. vi. 2.

6. Is there any good reason for postponing this duty on the ground that you are not fit, or have not the right feeling?

No; for if I at once trustfully go to him with the feeling I have, he will not reject me.

Mark ix. 24.

7. Into what relations to God's law does faith in Christ bring you?

I am justified; that is, I am forgiven and accepted as righteous in Christ's name, and as united to him.

Acts xiii. 38, 39; Rom. iii. 24-28, v. 1;
Philip. iii. 8, 9.

8. What are some other effects of faith?

It makes me a child of God; it ensures to me the gift of the indwelling Spirit; it purifies the heart; it overcomes the world; it fills the soul with joy; comprehensively, it saves.

Gal. iii. 26; John vii. 39; Acts xv. 9;
1 John v. 4; 1 Peter i. 8, 9; Acts
xvi. 31.

9. Can the Christian life be sustained without faith in the Lord Jesus Christ?

No; not a moment.

John vi. 50, 51, xi. 25, 26, xv. 5.

10. How does saving faith attest its genuineness?

It makes Christ a living and precious reality to the soul, and calls forth supreme devotedness to him.

Gal. ii. 20; 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.

11. If you fail of salvation, what will be the only cause?

My unbelief, or want of faith in Christ as a Saviour.

John iii. 14-19.

12. Are you determined, by the grace of God, not to fail of salvation through unbelief?

PRAYER.

Lord Jesus, I confess with deep sorrow,
that I am a guilty and lost sinner.
I deserve thy wrath on account of my sins.
But thanks to thy name,
thou hast died for me.
Thou art both able and willing to save me.
Thou dost invite me to come to thee.
I accept thy gracious offer.
I come just as I am,
sinful and unworthy.
I take thee as my full and perfect Saviour.
Be pleased to accept and forgive me.
Help me to be thy faithful disciple,
and, forsaking all other helpers,
to trust thee only,
and trust thee forever. Amen.

LESSON VII.

OBEDIENCE.

1. What duties do you owe to Jesus Christ as your Lord and Master?

Those of a disciple; of a follower; of a servant; the duties of a ready and hearty obedience.

Luke xiv. 26, 27; John xii. 26, xxi. 22;
Rom. i. 1.

2. Whence and how are you to learn what he would have you do?

From his own words and those of his inspired servants; from the teachings of his Spirit; from the promptings of an intelligent love to him, and through the medium of prayer for his guidance.

John xiv. 15, 16; Acts ix. 6; Gal. ii. 20.

3. What will ever keep you in the path of obedience?

A single-hearted desire to please and honor him.

Gal. i. 10; Eph. vi. 6, 7.

4. What do you say of a strict formal obedience, rendered from other motives than those of love, as, for example, from a regard to your standing among men, from constraint of conscience, or from fear?

It has no value as a Christian grace, and falls short of that which our Lord demands.

Matt. vi. 2, 5, xxiii. 28; 2 Tim. iii. 5.

5. Does a sincere purpose to serve Christ admit of any limit as to duration?

No. I must devote myself to him for all my future being, or my service will be worthless as it regards his acceptance.

Luke ix. 62, xvii. 32.

6. Must the will of Christ in your estimation outrank all other claims?

It must. Whenever the wishes of friends, human laws or rules of conduct; or social usages conflict with his will, I must set them aside and obey him.

Matt. x. 37; Acts iv. 19, 20; Rom. xii. 2.

7. May you in any case excuse yourself from obedience to Christ on the ground that obedience exposes you to loss and suffering?

I may not. I must make no reserves, even at the risk of martyrdom for his sake.

Matt. x. 38, 39; Luke xiv. 33.

8. How can obedience to Christ always be made easy under the most trying conditions?

By those supports of divine grace which are never withheld from hearts fully consecrated to him.

Phil. iv. 13.

9. In entering upon the service of Christ, what is the first duty to be performed?

The first one that comes to hand ; whether prayer, a kind word or deed, an act of self-control under provocation, or of self-denial under temptation, or a testimony borne for Christ.

Eccl. ix. 10; Luke iii. 10-14.

10. How in the common, every-day affairs of life, can you please Christ as your Lord and Master?

By doing everything as for him; whether studying, or toiling, or trading, or taking recreation. Whether I eat or drink, or whatever I do, I am to do all to his glory.

1 Cor. x. 31; Col. iii. 17.

11. Is it right to do an act if you doubt whether it accords with Christ's will?

It is not; for thereby I soil my conscience and fall into condemnation.

Rom. xiv. 23.

12. Does it require constant watchfulness and courage to avoid temptations to disobedience?

It does; and I should never forget that my strength for resistance comes only from above.

Matt. xxvi. 41; 1 Cor. x. 13.

13. What impression is produced on the world by examples of faithful Christian obedience?

They greatly honor Christ, and commend the Gospel to the acceptance of unbelievers.

Matt. v. 16; 1 Peter ii. 12.

14. What are the rewards of fidelity?

Great peace and usefulness here, and an exalted seat in glory hereafter.

—— Mark x. 29, 30; Rev. xxii. 14.

15. Is it not obligatory on you, and practicable for you, here and now, to devote yourself fully to a life of obedience to Christ?

It is. Postponement, or hesitation even, is not only rebellion against God, but extreme folly.

Luke ix. 59-62, xix. 5.

PRAYER.

Merciful Father, help me, I pray thee,
to be a faithful follower of Christ, thy Son.
May his service be ever my delight.
Let no temptations draw me astray
into paths of disobedience.
Thou knowest my waywardness and folly:
make me truly wise and steadfast.
Thou knowest my weakness:
nerve me with strength to resist evil.
Oh, blessed Jesus, thy great love constrains me.
I take thee as my Lord and Master.
Teach me what thou wilt have me do.
Write thy laws upon my heart.
It is but little that I can do to please thee.
But whatever it be, help me to do it cheerfully.
I pray thee bring sinners to repentance.
Oh that many here might become thy disciples.
May they learn how precious thou art
to those who take thy yoke upon them.
Grant these mercies and to thee shall be the glory.
Amen.

LESSON VIII.

PRAYER.

1. What is communion with God?

It is that personal spiritual converse which, as a child of God, I may hold with my Heavenly Father.

Gal. iv. 6; Eph. ii. 18.

2. How may you hold communion with God?

By devout meditation upon his works and word, and by prayer.

Psa. xvi. 7, 8; xix. 14; civ. 34; lxiii. 1-6.

3. What is prayer?

It is the offering up of my desires to God for things which I need, in a spirit of penitence for sin, and of thankfulness for his mercies.

Psa. lxii. 8; Luke xi. 1-13; Phil. iv. 6;
1 John v. 14, 15.

4. Why is penitence for sin essential to acceptable prayer?

Because it is a fitting tribute of grief to the wounded honor of God, and a virtual acceptance of his holy law as my rule of duty.

Psa. lxvi. 18; Neh. ix. 33; Dan. ix. 7.

5. What do you say of thankfulness as an element in prayer?

It is a just recognition of former blessings, and implies a preparedness to improve faithfully the new blessings asked for.

Dan. vi. 10; Col. iv. 2.

6. What relation has faith to prayer?

Prayer is an impossibility without faith in the Being to whom I pray. And further, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as my Mediator opens wide the door of mercy to those who pray in his name.

Heb. xi. 6; James i. 6; John xiv. 13, 14, xvi. 23, 24.

7. For what objects are you authorized to pray?

For all things needful to myself or to others; especially for spiritual blessings.

Phil. iv. 6; 1 Tim. ii. 1-4.

8. Are you warranted to pray in the full expectation of receiving the specific blessing asked for?

In cases where God has expressly promised to bestow a specific blessing in answer to prayer, as, for example, the gift of the Holy Spirit, I may fully expect to receive it. But when the blessing asked for has not been pledged by express promise, then, though God may accept

my prayer, there must be in my mind some degree of doubt as to whether he will see best to bestow the gift, calling for the exercise of submission to his will in the case. And further, no favorable answers can ever be looked for to my prayers for a blessing, unless I am using all available human means for securing that blessing. Work must be added to prayer to secure a favorable result.

Luke xi. 13; xxii. 42; James i. 5; 2 Cor. xii. 8, 9.

9. What special aid does God give you in prayer?

The aid of his Holy Spirit.

Rom. viii. 26.

10. How long should you persevere in praying for the same objects?

Some things are at all times so essential to our human welfare, that prayer for them should never be remitted. For objects of occasional interest, as, *e. g.*, recovery from sickness, or the conversion of a friend, I should perseveringly pray, until God in his Providence decides the case either favorably or adversely to my requests.

Luke xi. 1-4; xviii. 1-7; 2 Cor. xii. 9.

11. Is it essential to prayer that your desires be expressed in words?

It is very important and helpful, when convenient, to give vocal utterance to my desires. But God accepts the sincere voiceless prayer of the heart.

1 Sam. i. 12, 13; Psa. lxvi. 17, 19; lxxvii. 1.

12. What kind of prayer is of fundamental importance in the maintenance of the Christian life?

Secret prayer,—prayer in the closet each morning and evening at least.

Matt. vi. 6; Psa. lv. 17; v. 3; cxli. 2.

13. Is it your duty and privilege to unite with others in worship?

It is; at the family altar; in the prayer-meeting; and in the worship of the sanctuary.

1 Chron. xvi. 43; Acts i. 13, 14; iii. 1; xii. 12; 1 Cor. xiv. 15, 16, 26.

14. Ought you always to live in the Spirit of prayer?

Yes. I should live in constant communion with God, and be prepared in times of special need to invoke and to receive his help.

Psa. xvi. 7, 8; Neh. ii. 4; vi. 14; 1 Thess. v. 17.

15. Does not God now call upon you to consecrate yourself henceforth to a life of prayer?

Psa. cxvi. 2.

PRAYER.

Heavenly Father, I am entirely dependent on thee
for every good and perfect gift.

But thou hast promised to hear the prayers
of thy needy children.

Give me faith in thy gracious promises.

Teach me, by thy Spirit, how to pray,
so that I may obtain all needed blessings.

May secret prayer be my daily delight.

May social and public worship
be to me a source of great profit.

Guard me, O God, against formalism in prayer;
and against wandering and distracting thoughts.

Awaken within me earnest desires

for the enlargement of thy church,

for the conversion of souls,

and for the coming of thy kingdom.

Having lived a life of prayer on earth,

may I be prepared to enter upon

an eternity of praise in heaven.

I ask all in Jesus' name. Amen.

LESSON IX.

LOVE TO GOD.

1. What virtue or grace of character fulfills all the commandments of God?

Love. His commandments are the transcript of his own moral perfection.

Matt. xxii. 36-40; 1 John iv. 8, 16.

2. Wherein consists the excellence of love as a law of action?

It promotes in the highest degree the happiness of him who exercises it, and prompts him to make others perfectly happy: so that a world in which love reigned would be as happy as it could be.

Rom. xiii. 10; 1 John iv. 18; v. 3.

3. What are the chief elements of love to God?

Delight in the beauty and loveliness of his character; hearty devotion to whatever pleases him and promotes his glory; and gratitude for his favors.

Psa. lxxiii. 25, 26; Isa. lviii. 14; Matt. v. 16; Psa. cxvi. 1, 12-14

4. What is the only measure of the love which you owe to God?

My capacity to love. I am to love him with all the heart I have, that is supremely. An angel can do no more.

Mark xii. 33.

5. Why should you love God supremely?

Because of his perfect moral excellence; and because of his near relations to me as my almighty Creator; my all-wise and righteous Sovereign; my loving Father; and my merciful Redeemer.

Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7; Psa. xxxiv. 8; cxlv. 1, 2; Mal. i. 6; Psa. ciii.

6. May repentance, faith, and obedience be regarded as manifestations of love to God?

They may.

Psa. xcvi. 10; xviii. 1, 2; John xiv. 23.

7. In what other forms does this love express itself?

In the desire to be like God; in delight in communion with him; in regard for his word and worship; in brotherly attachment to his people; in confidence in his promises; and in acquiescence in his will.

Psa. cxix. 97; xvi. 2, 3; Matt. v. 44, 45; 1 John i. 3; 1 Pet. iv. 19; 2 Pet. i. 4.

8. Where does your love to God find its source and spring?

In his love to me.

1 John iv. 10, 19.

9. Whence arises the peculiar tenderness of the love you owe to the Lord Jesus Christ?

From his close relations to me as the Mediator of the Father's love, and from the greatness of his personal sacrifice in my behalf.

Gal. ii. 20; 1 Tim. i. 12-15.

10. What are some of the effects of love to Christ upon the character and life?

It leads to ready obedience to his will; to Christ-like sacrifice for the salvation of men; to forbearance under provocation; to forgiveness of injuries; and to a love of all who bear his image.

John xiii. 35; John xv. 14; 2 Cor. xi. 23-33; 1 Pet. ii. 21-25; Col. iii. 13.

11. Is there not enough in the love of Christ to you as a sinner to melt you into penitence and responsive love to him?

There is.

Rom. v. 6-8; 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.

12. Is not a want of love to Christ a sin of peculiar aggravation?

Yes. It falls under special condemnation.

1 Cor. xvi. 22.

13. What things has God prepared for them that love him?

Things glorious beyond comparison or conception.

1 Cor. ii. 9.

14. Do you give the Lord Jesus Christ the first place in your love?

PRAYER.

O God, thou art worthy of all my love.
Open my eyes to thy perfect beauty.
Consecrate me to the doing of thy perfect will.
Inspire me with thankfulness for thy perfect gifts.
Enable me truly to say,
Whom have I in heaven but thee?
and, there is none upon earth that I desire beside
thee.
Oh! that I might be thy loving child,
and have thee for my heavenly Father.
Blessed Jesus, thou art my heart's best portion.
Bind me fast to thyself in love.
Show me what thou wilt have me to do.
Whatever be the sacrifice required,
help me to yield thee a ready obedience.
To me to live, be it Christ, and Christ only.
Endue me with power from on high:
that souls may be saved,
and thy kingdom be enlarged
through my labors.
And to thee with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
be all the glory. Amen.

LESSON X.

LOVE TO MAN.

1. What is the Law of Love to man?

Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

Matt. xxii. 39.

2. Who is your neighbor?

Man as man. Any man whose welfare I may in any manner promote, whatever be his race, worldly possessions, social position, or moral character; even though he be my enemy.

Luke x. 29-37.

3. What is the measure of love to your neighbor?

My love to myself.

Matt. vii. 12.

4. Why are you bound to love your neighbor as yourself?

Because he is my fellow-man; and because we both are children of God as our common Father.

Mal. ii. 10; James ii. 8, 9.

5. Does love make any discrimination with respect to its objects?

Yes, necessarily. For while it embraces all in its benevolent regards, its obligations are increased by nearness of relation and by opportunity. Thus, God throws upon each one a responsibility for some special objects, as, *e. g.*, upon a father, the care of his children.

1 Tim. v. 8; Gal. vi. 10.

6. What two forms does love to one's neighbor assume?

A negative and a positive: doing him no ill; and doing him good: reciprocity and beneficence.

Rom. xiii. 10; Heb. xiii. 16.

7. In what ways may you violate the law of love, by doing ill to your neighbor?

By injuring him in his person, his property, his reputation, or his character.

Mark x. 19.

8. Name some sins included under this class of violations of the law of love.

Anger, malice, envy, fraud, unchastity, falsehood, covetousness, enticement to sin.

Matt. v. 21-48; 1 Cor. vi. 7-10, xiii. 4-6.

9. May you sin against your neighbor when there is no bad outward act committed?

Yes; in the sight of God, evil thoughts and desires may be as truly a breach of the law of love as evil words or acts.

Matt. ix. 4; 1 John iii. 15.

10. What is the central element in all Christian love?

Self-sacrifice for others' good, the opposite of which is selfishness.

Matt. xx. 26-28; Rom. ix. 1-3, xiv. 21;
2 Cor. xii. 15; 1 John iii. 16.

11. What are some of the virtues through which love in the positive form finds expression?

Kindness, candor, forbearance, liberality, compassion, self-forgetful devotion to the good of others.

Eph. iv. 32, v. 1, 2; Phil. iv. 8.

12. Name some methods by which you can do good to those whose condition creates a claim upon your love.

I can comfort the afflicted; supply the needy; forgive the injurious; enlighten the ignorant; reform the vicious; and save the lost.

Acts xxvi. 18; James i. 27; 1 John iii. 16, 17; Rom. xii. 20; 1 Pet. iii. 8, 9; James v. 19, 20.

13. Is not the hearty support of Gospel Institutions at home and abroad the duty of all the disciples of Christ?

It is.

Matt. xxviii. 19, 20; Mark xvi. 15; 1 Cor. ix. 13, 14; Heb. xiii. 17, 18.

14. How can you as an individual aid in converting the world to Christ?

By a personal consecration to this work in my sphere of life; by liberal giving; and by believing prayer.

Matt. vi. 10; Acts i. 8, viii. 4; 2 Cor. ix. 6, 7; Eph. vi. 18-20.

15. While it is your duty to do good unto all men as you have opportunity, is it not important for your efficiency and growth that you select some particular objects on which specially to bestow your beneficent labors?

It is.

Rom. xii. 4-8.

16. What great rewards wait for those who live a life of love to their fellow-men?

They inherit the heavenly kingdom; they are received into everlasting habitations; they shine as the stars forever and ever. Dan. xii. 3; Matt. xxv. 34-40; Luke xvi. 9.

17. How may you at once enter fully upon the Christian life from the point of love to your neighbor?

By consecrating myself to a life of love, in obedience to Christ's will, and with a desire to be like him.

Matt. v. 7, 9, 16; Luke vi. 35, x. 36, 37.

PRAYER.

O Lord, breathe into me a spirit of love.
Make me like thy dear Son,
truly devoted to the good of others.
Cast selfishness utterly out of my heart.
As I would that others should do to me,
so help me to do to them.
I pray that all the unlovely passions
may be subdued within me.
May I be kind and helpful
to those in want and sorrow.
May I forgive those who injure me.
May I do good to my enemies.
Lord Jesus, help me to devote myself
to the saving of lost souls.
Show me how I can support thy cause,
and give me a heart to do it.
Oh that many might be converted
through my influence and labors.
Make me true till death. Amen.

LESSON XI.

CONFESSION OF CHRIST.

1. Inasmuch as piety chiefly pertains to the secret relations of the soul to God, may it not properly be kept secret from the world?

No. Wherever it exists it tends by its own nature to manifest itself in the life and in an open confession.

Psa. xl. 10; Matt. v. 14-16, vii. 16-20;
Luke vi. 45.

2. What feelings sometimes prompt those who regard themselves as Christians to shrink from a public profession of their faith?

In some cases, fear of the world, and in other cases, excessive timidity occasions hesitation.

John ix. 21, 22; xii. 42, 43.

3. Do love and obedience to Christ require that you confess him before men?

They do. The Scriptures declare this confession to be an imperative duty, and as having a close relation to salvation. It

is not a requirement to be neglected at one's option.

Matt. x. 32, 33; Mark viii. 38; Rom. x. 9, 10; 2 Cor. vi. 14-18.

4. What is the divinely appointed method of making this confession?

Uniting oneself with the church and receiving the sacraments.

Acts ii. 38-42.

5. Is baptism required of all believers?

It is; as a symbol of their internal purification, and a seal of their covenant union to Christ.

Matt. xxviii. 19; Acts ii. 38, xxii. 16.

6. Is it required of all believers that they partake of the Lord's Supper?

It is; as the bread and wine used therein signify and seal to them the communion of the body and blood of Christ.

Luke xxii. 19, 20; 1 Cor. x. 16, 17, xi. 24-26.

7. What is the object of the organization of the church?

To concentrate the spiritual forces of believers for united testimony and co-operation in sustaining and promoting the kingdom of Christ.

Eph. iv. 4-16; 1 Tim. iii. 15.

8. What do you say of a voluntary neglect on the part of those calling themselves Christians to connect themselves by profession with the church?

It is a depreciation of Christ's wisdom and will in organizing the church, putting a slight upon an institution for which he gave himself in love, and which is necessary for the success of his cause in the world. It is disobedience to Christ.

Matt. xvi. 18, 19; Eph. i. 22, 23, v. 24-32; 1 Tim. iii. 15.

9. Do not Christians need church fellowship for their own spiritual growth and usefulness, and for helpfulness to one another?

They do.

Matt. xviii. 15-20; Rom. xiv. 1-19; Gal. vi. 1, 2; Heb. iii. 13.

10. What are the necessary qualifications for church membership?

Credible evidence of piety and a purpose to live a Christian life.

Acts ii. 41, 47; 1 Cor. i. 2; 1 Thess. i. 1-10.

11. How soon after conversion should a profession of religion be made?

Theoretically, a profession of one's faith is to follow immediately upon the exercise of faith. But practically, a brief delay is advisable in order that the supposed conversion may prove itself to be genuine, and not the result of a temporary excitement.

Acts ii. 41, iv. 4, viii. 13-23; Matt. xiii. 20, 21.

12. At how early an age may a child be received into the church?

Just as early as the child understands the evil of sin or wrong-doing, and is intelligently conscious of faith in Christ as a Saviour, and of a purpose ever to live so as to please him.

Eph. vi. 1-4; Col. iii. 20; 2 Tim. iii. 15; 1 John ii. 12, 13.

13. Does a delay in professing one's faith in Christ beyond the times indicated in the last two answers, always involve the guilt of disobedience?

No. Sometimes God's providence interposes hindrances in the form of sickness or detention from church privileges. Sometimes children are kept back by parental counsel or authority. And then ignorance and other causes may lessen responsibility or palliate delay. But ordi-

narily, the performance of this duty should be as prompt as consistency with intelligent action permits.

Acts xix. 1-7.

14. Are you not bound to possess the qualifications for church membership?

I am. The conditions of church membership are the same as the conditions of salvation.

Matt. xxviii. 19 ; Acts ii. 30.

PRAYER.

Lord Jesus, may I love thee so heartily,
that I shall never be ashamed
to confess thy name before men.
Forbid that I should hide my light;
but may I let it clearly shine,
that thereby thou mayest be glorified.
As thou hast dearly loved the church,
and given thyself for it,
so lead me to seek its highest welfare.
Help me rightly to estimate
the value of the holy sacraments.
Blessed Master, my strength is in thee.
Withhold not, I pray thee, the grace I need
to profess a good profession of my faith.
In mingling with thy people,
grant that I may find great profit.
And may the communion of saints on earth
serve to prepare me
for the holy fellowship of heaven.
I ask all in thy dear name. Amen.

LESSON XII.

HOPE.

1. What is Christian Hope ?

It is the firm expectation and the anticipated enjoyment of the future completed salvation promised by God to his children. It is faith looking forward to the heavenly state.

Rom. viii. 24, 25; Heb xi. 1.

2. What is the office of the Christian hope ?

To bring the power of this unseen and future blessedness to bear upon my life and character below.

Rom. viii. 24; Titus ii. 13; Heb. iii. 6.

3. By what peculiarly expressive term is the heavenly state, which is the object of our hope, designated in the Scriptures ?

Glory; the glory which shall be revealed in us. The Christian hope is "the hope of glory."

Rom. v. 2; Col. i. 27.

4. What does "glory" signify in this connection?
The ideal perfection realized; perfection of character, of beauty, of social condition, of bliss.

Col. iii. 4; 1 Thess. ii. 12.

5. By what other terms is the object of this hope set forth?

As eternal life; as salvation; as seeing and being like Christ.

Titus i. 2, iii. 7; 1 Thess. v. 8; 1 John iii. 2, 3.

6. On what foundation does hope rest?

On God;—his character, perfections, and promises.

Psa. lxxi. 5; Rom. xv. 13; 1 Tim. i. 1; Heb. vi. 17, 18; 1 Peter i. 21.

7. What comfort does hope afford you in your Christian labors?

It assures me that they shall not be in vain; and that, so far as they are burdensome, I shall eventually rest from them.

1 Cor. ix. 10, xv. 58; 1 Peter i. 13; Rev. xiv. 13.

8. What support does it furnish in trials?

It is as a helmet for defense in the strife, and an anchor for security in the storm. It gives patience to endure, and a promise of ultimate deliverance.

1 Thess. v. 8; Heb. vi. 19; Rom. v. 3-5; 1 Thess. i. 3.

9. What is the molding power of a good hope on the character?

It has a purifying power.

Titus ii. 11-13; 1 John iii. 2, 3.

10. Is there danger of deceiving yourself by a false hope?

There is. A sinner awakened to his lost condition is prone to seek relief from his convictions in self-flattery rather than in thorough repentance.

Prov. x. 28, xi. 7; Matt. vii. 21-27; Eph. ii. 12; James i. 26.

11. What are the best safeguards against false hopes?

A taking of the word of God as the only rule of life; unremitted watchfulness; earnest prayer; and a daily walk with Christ.

Luke xxi. 34-36; Rom. xv. 4; Col. i. 27; 2 Peter i. 19.

12. What are the characteristics of a good hope?

It springs from a living faith in Christ; it is a fruit of the indwelling Spirit; it is accompanied by holy living; it grows brighter and brighter.

Rom. v. 2, xv. 13; 2 Thess. ii. 16; 1 Peter i. 3-5, 13-16.

13. Are you warranted in cherishing a full assurance of hope?

I am.

Eph. i. 18 ; 2 Tim. i. 12 ; Heb. vi. 11 ;
1 John v. 19.

14. Is your hope in Christ well-founded?

1 Peter iii. 15.

PRAYER.

Lord, I praise thee as the God of hope.
In trials I may be cheered
by the prospect of perfect bliss.
Amid imperfections here,
I may anticipate a home of perfect purity.
Grant me a good hope through grace;
a hope grounded in the faith of Christ,
and wrought in me by the Holy Spirit.
May it never make me ashamed.
Oh, Divine Spirit, give me not over
to the delusions of a false hope.
But may the hope that I cherish
be as an anchor of the soul,
sure and steadfast, cast within the veil.
May it be also a transforming power,
purifying me even as Christ is pure.
And at last may my hope be realized,
amid the glories of heaven.
And to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be the glory forever. Amen.

LESSON XIII.

GROWTH.

1. In what strong terms is the great change involved in conversion set forth in the Scriptures?

As a turning from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God; as becoming new creatures; as a passing from death unto life.

Acts xxvi. 18; Col. i. 13; 2 Cor. v. 17;
1 John iii. 14.

2. Is this a complete and thorough change of character?

It is not. It is a radical change implying a new disposition as a controlling principle of life. But this principle is at first immature and weak,—only the germ of a thorough renovation.

Matt. xiii. 31–33.

3. What, then, is the goal to which conversion points?

Moral and spiritual perfection. Perfection in holiness, in love, in knowledge.

Mark iv. 28; 1 Cor. xiii. 9–12; Eph. iv. 13, v. 27.

4. What is to be your daily life-work as a Christian convert ?

To live less and less to self and the world, and to become more and more conformed to the one perfect pattern, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Eph. iv. 14-16, 22, 24; Heb. vi. 1; 1 Peter i. 13-16; 2 Peter i. 5-7.

5. What are the principal means of growth ?

Meditation on God's character and truth; secret prayer; church fellowship and worship; and unceasing watchfulness and fidelity. In using these means, a humble dependence on God is essential to success.

2 Cor. iii. 18, vii. 1; Eph. vi. 18; Heb. x. 24, 25; Phil. ii. 12, 13, iii. 13, 14.

6. Whence come the hindrances to growth ?

The great hindrances to the growth of piety, as well as to its beginnings, are the world, the flesh, and the devil.

James iv. 4; Gal. v. 16, 17; 1 Peter v. 8.

7. What are some of the common forms under which these hindrances act upon us ?

Externally, they are: bad example, worldly show, popular errors, demoralized public sentiment, and enticements to sin. Internally, they are: ambition of the world's

friendship and honors, covetousness, carnal appetites and lusts, love of ease, self-confidence and self-righteousness.

Gal. v. 7, ii. 13 ; John xii. 42, 43 ;
James i. 14, iv. 4 ; 1 Cor. xv. 33 ; 2
Peter iii. 17.

8. What judgment are you to form of a professed piety which is not progressive ?

That it is sickly, and if continued, that it is radically defective.

Matt. xiii. 21 ; Gal. iii. 3 ; Heb. iv. 1, 11 ;
2 Peter i. 9, 10.

9. What encouragements have you constantly to strive for higher attainments in piety ?

The example of good men ; and the promise of divine help.

Eph. iii. 16-21 ; John xvii. 21-24 ; 1
Peter i. 3-5.

10. What constitute evidences of growth ?

An increasing tenderness of conscience ; a heartier fellowship with the all-pure one ; higher and higher ideals of character and life ; more spontaneity in duty ; and a coming more and more under the reign of patience, gentleness, forbearance and the other passive virtues.

Rom. xii. 2 ; 2 Cor. iii. 18 ; James i. 3,
4 ; 1 Peter ii. 20-24.

11. What is to be said of a person who claims to have attained sinless perfection?

That he is the victim of a delusion; neither knowing himself as God knows him, nor the spirituality and breadth of God's holy commandments.

1 John i. 8-10.

12. What is the glorious issue of a steadily growing piety?

Meetness for heaven in the finished likeness of Christ; and ultimately, a full vision of God, and a participation in his own perfect blessedness.

1 Thess. v. 23; Col. i. 12; Eph. iii. 16-19, v. 25-27; 1 John iii. 1-3; Rev. xxii. 1-5.

13. Do you mean to be a growing Christian?

PRAYER.

O God, I thank thee that thou hast led me
to seek thy face and favor.
May this be but the beginning
of a progressive Christian life.
Having begun a good work in me,
carry it on, I pray thee, unto perfection.
Forbid that I should be hindered,
by the allurements of sin,
or by the opposition of the world.
Help me, Divine Spirit, to keep my conscience
tender,
to perform my duties more cheerfully,
and to seek a nearer fellowship with Christ.
May I not only grow in active zeal,
but in the gentler graces of character.
May my temper daily become more subdued,
my words and acts more kind,
and my disposition more lovely.
Thus may I grow in meetness for heaven.
And when dismissed from earth,
may I be with and like my dear Lord.
And among many who have been saved
through my examp'e and labors,
may I sing his praises forever and ever. Amen.

OUTLINE PLAN FOR A SERIES OF LESSONS.—I

1. Sin the great evil.
2. God our Father.
3. Jesus Christ our Saviour.
4. The Holy Spirit our Sanctifier.
5. Love the law of our life.
6. Communion with God in prayer.
7. Communion with God in the study of his word.
8. Fellowship with God's people.
9. The world as our field of labor.
10. This life as our season of trial.
11. Heaven our home.

OUTLINE PLAN.—II.

In the way of variety, texts of Scripture may be given out as themes for instruction.

1. "He came to himself" (Luke xv. 17). Self-recollection.
2. "I remembered God and was troubled" (Psa. lxxvii. 3). Realization of God, and its effects.
3. "By grace are ye saved" (Eph. ii. 8). Salvation is wholly of grace.

4. "Turn to the Lord" (Hos. xiv. 2.) Conversion.
5. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts xvi. 31). Faith.
6. "Follow me" (John i. 43). Taking Christ as a Master.
7. "Men ought always to pray" (Luke xviii. 1). Prayer.
8. "Resist the devil" (James iv. 7). Resistance to evil.
9. "Love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom. xiii. 10). Love.
10. "With the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. x. 10). Confession of Christ in its relation to salvation.
11. "Rejoice in the Lord always" (Phil. iv. 4). Christian joy.
12. "Walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing" (Col. i. 10). Pleasing God in our daily walk.
13. "Be thou faithful unto death" (Rev. ii. 10). Enduring fidelity.

BRIEF PRAYERS FOR THE USE OF CHILDREN IN THE PASTOR'S CLASS.

NOTE.—While it is not wise to lay upon children in these meetings the requirement to offer prayer individually, they should be encouraged to do so, as well as to pray in concert with others. And when the meetings take on a familiar home-like character, it is surprising with what ease and propriety they will ordinarily express themselves. In a class of twenty children and young people under my instruction a few years ago, it frequently happened that, after I had offered a brief prayer, I was followed by the person who was kneeling next to me, and that one by the next, and so on quite around the room, with only a break or two. In order to aid those to whom utterance was difficult, the subjoined short prayers were written out and put into their hands to be committed to memory and used as the need might require.

Blessed Jesus, I take thee as my Lord and Saviour. Be pleased to dwell ever in my heart while I stay on earth, and may I dwell with thee forever in heaven. Amen.

Lord Jesus, let thy cause greatly prosper here. Bring sinners to trust thee. Build up thy dear church, and use me as thy servant in doing good ; and thine shall be the glory. Amen.

Lord Jesus, I trust thee wholly as my Saviour. Cleanse me in thy precious blood. Keep me faithful to thee as long as I live, and then take me to thyself. Amen.

Heavenly Father, I praise thee that thou hast called back and pardoned thy wayward child. Strengthen me to do all thy will. Make me a blessing to others. I ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

O Lord, our dear Father, restore us fully to thyself. Help us to be thy loving and obedient children. May we honor thee by holy living and by doing good. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

Lord Jesus, make us wholly like thyself. Breathe thy peace into our hearts. Be to us all in all. Amen.

Heavenly Father, lead us into a knowledge of thy truth. Grant us a spirit of earnest prayer, and answer us in mercy, that thy name may be glorified. Amen.

Our heavenly Father, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Make us ever submissive and obedient. May our desires be pure, and our lives holy and useful. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen

Dear Lord Jesus, we want none but thee. Fill us with love, and conform us to thy blessed will ; and thine be the glory forever. Amen.

Loving Father, give to us thy Spirit, and make us workers together with thee in doing good. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

Lord Jesus, we consecrate ourselves wholly to thy service. Make us faithful unto death, and thine shall be the glory. Amen.

Blessed Jesus, make us like thyself, holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners, that we may be prepared to dwell with thee forever. Amen.

Heavenly Father, lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. We ask it in Christ's name. Amen.

O God of Love, help us to love one another with pure hearts fervently. May we build one another up in comfort, in piety and in usefulness. We ask it in Christ's name. Amen.

Lord Jesus, make me kind in my words, gentle in disposition, sweet in temper. Thus may I be like thee, and honor thy name in the world. Amen.





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